

The 20-hour test: working out what to hand over first

Most owners hire before they know what the job is, then blame the hire. Two hours with a notepad fixes it.

About 6 minutes to read

The most common reason an offshore hire fails is not the person. It is that nobody defined the job, so the new starter spent three weeks waiting to be told what to do and the owner concluded it was not working.

Track a week first

For five working days, write down every task you do and roughly how long it took. Not a time sheet, a list. At the end of the week you will have between forty and eighty items, and the pattern will be obvious before you finish analysing it.

Sort into four piles

Pile	What goes in it	What to do
Only you	Sales conversations, pricing decisions, anything requiring your judgement or your face	Keep. This is what the hire buys you time for.
Delegate now	Recurring, rules-based, low-judgement: inbox triage, scheduling, data entry, invoicing, chasing	First 20 hours of the role.
Delegate later	Needs context you have not written down yet: quoting, client comms, reporting	Month two or three, once they know the business.
Automate instead	Repetitive with no judgement at all: copying between systems, reminders, formatting	Do not hire for this. See our AI guide.

The test itself

Add up the 'delegate now' pile. If it does not reach twenty hours a week of recurring work, you are not ready for a part-time hire yet, and we will tell you that on the call rather than take the fee.

Write the job from the pile, not from a template

A job description assembled from the tasks you actually listed will beat anything generic. It also makes the interview easy: you are asking whether the candidate has done these specific things, not whether they are a good communicator.

Before you brief us

- ☐ Tracked a full week of tasks
- ☐ Sorted them into the four piles
- ☐ Counted the 'delegate now' hours, at least 20 a week for part-time, 35+ for full-time
- ☐ Written down the three tasks that would make the biggest difference on day one
- ☐ Identified which tools they will need access to
- ☐ Decided who they report to and who answers their questions in week one
- ☐ Blocked two hours in your calendar to record screen-shares

This part is interactive

The hours calculator lives on the site, where you can put your own figures in:
menaitalentconsultants.com